

**IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

Appl. No. : Continuation of 09/580,204  
Applicants : A. MARIA, et al.  
Filed : Concurrently Herewith  
Group Art Unit : 2154 (Anticipated)  
Examiner : V. VU (Anticipated)

Docket No. : 12177/35603  
Customer No. : 23838

COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

**PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT**

Sir:

Applicants respectfully request entry of the following preliminary amendment, prior to examination of the above-identified continuation application.

**Amendments to the Specification** begin on page 2.

**Amendments to the Drawings** begin on page 5.

**Amendments to the Claims** begin on page 6.

**Remarks/Arguments** begin on page 9.